



# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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Helena Area Resource Office  
930 Custer Ave. W  
Helena, MT 59601

March 1, 1999

TO: Governor's Office, Julie Lapeyre, Room 204, State Capitol, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801  
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, POB 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, POB 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901  
Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
    Director's Office  
    Wildlife Division  
    Legal Unit  
    FWP Commissioners  
    State Bulletin Board  
Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, POB 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202  
Montana State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., POB 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800  
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, POB 595, Helena, MT 59624  
George Ochenski, POB 689, Helena, MT 59624  
Glen Hockett, 745 Doane Road, Bozeman, MT 59715  
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771  
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923  
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624  
Prickly Pear Sportsmen's Assoc., 219 Vawter St., Helena, MT 59601  
Broadwater Co. Commissioners, County Courthouse, Townsend, MT 59644  
Mark Ahner, Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 8001 N. Montana Ave., Helena, MT 59602  
Stephanie Utter, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Montana Area Office, P.O. Box 30137, Billings, MT 59107-0137  
Representative Gay Ann Masolo, 20 Buck Drive, Townsend, MT 59644  
Senator Duane Grimes, #4 Hole in the Wall, Clancy, MT 59634

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice has been prepared for a proposed parking lot construction project on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area (CFWMA) near Townsend, MT. After reviewing the analysis and the public comments, all of them supporting this proposal, it is my decision to approve this project.

Sincerely,

Michael Korn  
Helena Area Coordinator

Broadwater

**DECISION NOTICE**  
**Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area Parking Lot Construction**  
**Prepared by Region 3, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**  
**March 1, 1999**

**PROPOSAL**

This project is proposed for the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area (CFWMA), which is located approximately 1 mile north of Townsend, MT and is situated along the south end of Canyon Ferry Reservoir. The area is administered by the Bureau of Reclamation and is managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks under a special cooperative agreement with Reclamation (No. 98-FC-60-09540, effective 9/15/97). The Proposed Action consists of building an access road, parking lot, disabled-accessible interpretive overlook, and boat ramp along Pond 4 on the CFWMA. This project is being proposed to provide additional parking and improved access to the WMA due to increased use of the area by recreationists, both hunters and non-hunters.

The Pond 4 access will have a gravel road from Highway 12 to Pond 4, a 25 space parking lot, a disabled-accessible viewing platform with interpretive signs, a trail from the platform to the pond, and a gravel boat ramp. Adequate signage would be erected along Highway 12. This access will provide educational and viewing opportunities to local people as well as passing tourists. In addition, the boat ramp will provide another access point to the pond for waterfowl hunters. The north end of Pond 4 is the only existing boat access and in dry years may not provide access at all because of low water in the pond.

Total estimated cost for the project is \$35,059, which will be funded by FWP's statewide WMA operation and maintenance account..

**MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT PROCESS**

FWP is required to assess impacts of the proposal to the human and physical environment. The Pond 4 access proposal and its effects were documented by FWP in an Environmental Assessment (EA) to satisfy the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

A 21 day public comment period on the EA ran from February 3, 1999 through February 24, 1999. A legal notice was placed in the Townsend Star detailing how to acquire copies of the EA and providing comment on the proposal.

No significant issues were generated during the public comment period and no revisions were made to the Draft Environmental Assessment, which will therefore serve as the Final Environmental Assessment.

## **ISSUES RAISED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)**

The EA lists the issues in detail. These include: 1) soil disturbance and over-covering of soil with fill/surface material on less than one acre of idle land, 2) covering of non-native grasses by fill/surface material, short term increase in pond turbidity, 3) occasional short term disturbance of waterfowl, and 4) costs associated with annual maintenance at these sites. All issues were considered to be minor in impact.

## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

As of February 24, 1999, the Department received two written comments. Both comments supported the project. One of the comments also opposed the use of sportsmens dollars for construction of a wildlife viewing platform. The CFWMA management plan states that the area will be managed to "Provide productive habitat for the diversity of wildlife species that utilize the area and provide for consumptive and non-consumptive use of those resources" (FWP 1992). Management direction for CFWMA further promotes access for wildlife viewing.

## **DECISION**

Utilizing the EA and public comment, a decision must be rendered by FWP which addresses the concerns and issues identified for this proposed project.

Both FWP's analysis and all public input supported this expansion and construction project. This project would provide additional parking and improved access to the WMA for both disabled and non-disabled hunters and non-hunters.

After review of this proposal, an EIS is not required and it is my decision to approve this construction project.



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Michael Korn  
Helena Area Coordinator  
Helena, MT  
March 1, 1999